Trifles Design Worksheet

1. The way an audience perceives the play is shaped by the choice of performance venue, as well as the set that is designed for the play. Indeed, all the elements that you see and hear during a performance are bound to shape your perception of the play. Which of the following venues do you think can best meet the needs of the play?

Proscenium

Given the details in the script, why do you think it is the best venue for a production?

I think that a proscenium would work best for Trifles. The entire play focuses on the kitchen alone so space wise, there is no need for a thrust. Also, there is no particular action that needs to be seen in more detail by the audience, so a proscenium would work fine.

2. What are some of the challenges posed by the play on the design team?

The kitchen would probably be one of the most difficult things. The script is very specific in how the kitchen is set up to be messy. So, there would be a lot of details that the design team would have to set up. Like the cabinet for the bird cage, and the bread loaf, and others messy parts. Another thing would be having an upstairs for the men to go to. This way the women can hear when the men are heading downstairs and they can stop talking.

3. Choose a character from the play and suggest how she/he should be dressed. In what ways do you think the costume would help accentuate his/her character?

I would dress the women fairly similarly with a few key differences. Mrs. Peters would be in a very dull, long skirt whereas Mrs. Hale would be in a little shorter cut skirt showing more freedom. Also, the colors for Mrs. Hale would be brighter. This would indicate the more rebellious spirit of Mrs. Hale. It would also stand her out as the main progression of the play.

4. Given the content of the play, how might the lighting design help further the mood of the production?

Overall, the mood of the play is quite solemn. The lighting would be fairly dark or dull, with no bright colors. Cool colors would work better than warm colors to convey the sadness of the murder. The lighting could change a little when the bird is found because this is when the action really starts to progress.

5. Suggest music or sound effects that might be used to accentuate the mood or atmosphere of the play and the transitions between parts of the play.

Just like the lighting, the music needs to express the melancholy of the play. Slow sad music in the beginning when discussing the death of John Wright. Later the music can pick up when the bird is found. Then it can have a much lighter tone at the end when Mrs. Hale breaks through the “Trifles” stereotype with the “knot it” line.